

VZCZCXRO7291
PP RUEHPW
DE RUEHMO #0264 0321419
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 011419Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6367
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 000264

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/01/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [AF](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA COMPLAINS AFGHANS HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO
MILITARY AID OFFER

REF: A. 07 MOSCOW 4929

[1](#)B. 07 MOSCOW 5098

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Russia is concerned by Afghanistan's failure to respond to its offer of military assistance, which the GOR believes is indicative of larger problems in the Karzai Government. MFA Afghanistan Desk Chief Yuriy Khokhlov told us on January 30 that the GOR invited Afghan Defense Minister Wardak to Moscow in December to discuss the Russian offer to provide hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons and military supplies to the Afghan National Army (refs). The GOR planned to develop with the DefMin a list of material Russia could provide and discuss delivery. The GOR was told, however, that the DefMin was traveling outside of Afghanistan for over a month and was not available. When asked if the GOR had more recently approached the Afghans about the DefMin coming to Moscow, Khokhlov responded that Russia "does not go knocking on doors."

[1](#)2. (C) Khokhlov expressed exasperation with the Afghan Government, and asked how a country fighting an active insurgency could have its DefMin missing for such a long period? Furthermore, if strengthening the Army and improving security was an Afghan priority, why would it ignore Russia's offer? Khokhlov said that this situation raised serious questions about the capabilities of the Afghan Government, which he accused of "passivity" in the face of increasing insurgent attacks. The GOR remained concerned by the government's inability to expand central authority and carry out reconstruction and development projects. Khokhlov pointed, for example, to the Solong Tunnel, which remained heavily damaged and of limited use despite a Russian company's offer to reconstruct it using the original Soviet plans. Khokhlov counseled the U.S. to "reconsider" its support for certain Afghan officials and get more effective people into the government.

[1](#)3. (C) Khokhlov reiterated that the GOR supported the U.S. and NATO roles in Afghanistan. He stressed that the GOR had "no agenda" to re-establish influence in Afghanistan or undermine the U.S. "Russia has had enough of Afghanistan," according to Khokhlov. He explained that there were divisions within the GOR over the level of support for the U.S. and NATO, with the Defense Ministry and intelligence services suspicious of American intentions. During a recent inter-ministerial meeting on granting NATO transit rights through Russia and Central Asia to Afghanistan, Khokhlov said that objections from other ministries led the MFA to remind them that Putin had made the decision to "fully support" the U.S. and NATO.

[1](#)4. (C) Finally, Khokhlov advised that Afghanistan was an area in which the U.S. and Russia could cooperate more extensively. It could be a "bright spot in our

relationship," he added. In a meeting with the Ambassador on February 1, Putin's foreign policy advisor Sergey Prihodko reiterated that Russia was open to expanded cooperation, but would not do so as an "appendage" of NATO, and suggested again that the U.S. look at working with CSTO.

BURNS